

Léon Degrelle

Léon Joseph Marie Ignace Degrelle (15 June 1906 – 31 March 1994) was a Walloon Belgian nationalist, foreign volunteer of the Waffen-SS, and a postwar creator of a major construction company and a writer on topics such as the Waffen-SS, Hitler, and Holocaust revisionism.

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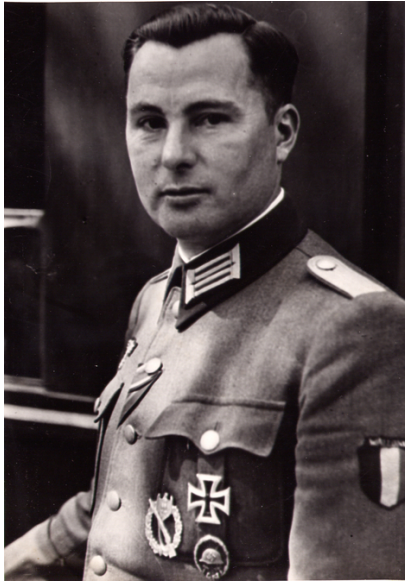
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Léon Degrelle during WW2

Life

Early life

Léon Degrelle was born on 15 June 1906 in Bouillon, in the Belgian province of Luxembourg, and baptized five days later as Léon Joseph Marie Ignace Degrelle. He was the fifth child of Marie Boever and Édouard Degrelle. Édouard was elected to the provincial council of Luxembourg for the first time in 1904 and became a respected conservative politician as a member of the Catholic Party.

After studying at a Jesuit college and later studying for a Law doctorate at the Université catholique de Louvain, Degrelle worked as a journalist for the conservative Roman Catholic periodical *Christus Rex*. During his time at this publication, he became attracted to the ideas of Charles Maurras and French Integralism. In October 1930, Degrelle took over the management of *Christus Rex*. He staffed it with young radical Catholic students. He produced leaflets and posters for the Catholic Party ahead of the 1932 election, earning *Christus Rex* and Degrelle many conservative allies. After the 1932 election, Degrelle began to refer to *Christus Rex* as a nationalist, pro-clerical political movement. His actions inside the Catholic Party saw him come into opposition with the mainstream of the same Party, many of whom were monarchist conservatives or centrists.

Degrelle married Marie Lemay, the daughter of a French industrialist, on 27 March 1932. The couple had five children.

He assumed total control of *Christus Rex* by 1933 and used the platform to attack the leadership of the Catholic Party. Over the interwar years Belgian Catholic politics had a split between the Catholic establishment and an authoritarian and radically clerical faction of urban, middle class students who viewed the Catholic Party as being weak and complacent.

Rexist Party

In early 1935, Degrelle morphed *Christus Rex* into the Rexist Party, a Catholic and nationalist party, after he left the mainstream Catholic Party that he found too moderate. The name refers to Christ the King ("Rex" in Latin). The party soon established contacts with and became influenced by fascist (broad sense) movements around Europe.

In 1936, Degrelle met with Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler. Elections in that year had given the party 21 of the 202 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 8 out of 101 in the Senate, making it the fourth-strongest force in Parliament, behind the major established parties (Labour, Catholic, Liberal). In the 1939 national election, Rex's share of votes fell to 4.4 per cent, and the party lost 17 of its 21 seats, largely to the mainstream Catholic and Liberal parties. In the mid 1930s, Degrelle became acquainted with the cartoonist Hergé.

WWII

When the war began, Degrelle approved of King Leopold III's policy of neutrality. After Belgium was invaded by the Germans on 10 May 1940, the Rexist Party split over the matter of resistance. He was arrested as a suspected collaborator, and evacuated to France, being released by the Germans when the occupation began. Degrelle returned to Belgium and proclaimed reconstructed Rexism to be in close union with National Socialism - in marked contrast with the small group of former Rexists who had begun fighting against the German occupiers from the underground.

He joined the Walloon legion of the Wehrmacht, which was raised in August 1941, to combat against the Soviet Union on the Eastern Front, and Degrelle himself joined it in combat. Lacking any previous military service Degrelle, joined as a private soldier, only later becoming an officer. Initially, the group was meant to represent a continuation of the Belgian Army, and fought as such during Operation Barbarossa - while integrating many Walloons that had volunteered for service.



A young Léon



Degrelle in Rexist uniform

Degrelle was a volunteer for the Waffen-SS and helped form the 28th SS Volunteer Grenadier Division Wallonian.

"Turning down an invitation to begin as an officer in the newly formed combat unit, he instead chose to start as a private, sharing all the burdens of his comrades. When he left his homeland in August 1941 to begin military service at the age of 35, he had never fired a gun. Nevertheless, he rose through the ranks to become commander of the unit that finally came to be known as the 28th SS Division "Wallonia."

As a result of the extraordinary courage and leadership he showed on the Narva front in Estonia, he became the first non-German to be awarded the coveted Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross. Hitler personally bestowed the honor on August 27, 1944.

Of the first 800 Walloon volunteers who left for the Eastern Front, only three survived the war, one of them Degrelle, who was wounded seven times during the course of his three and a half years of combat.^[1]

"When Degrelle returned to Brussels after fighting communism for four years on the Eastern Front, he was given the largest mass welcome in Belgian history. Two million Belgians lined the streets of Brussels to cheer the returning general only two months before the Allies invaded that country."^[2]

The revisionist Mark Weber has stated that there have been many lies about Degrelle, such as being responsible for deporting Jews from Belgium.^[1]

Severely wounded at Cherkasy in 1944, Degrelle steadily climbed in the Schutzstaffel (SS) hierarchy after the inclusion of Walloons in the Waffen-SS, being made an SS-Sturmabführer in April 1944. He received the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross and the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves by Hitler in 1944.

After the war

After the surrender of Berlin and death of Hitler, Degrelle moved to the still German-occupied Denmark and eventually Norway, where he commandeered a small aircraft. After a 1,500-mile flight over portions of Allied-occupied Europe to Franco's Spain, he was severely injured in a crash after running out of fuel.

While in hospital, he began writing *Campaign in Russia*.^[2]

"The Allies threatened to invade Spain unless Degrelle and wartime French premier Pierre Laval were not immediately turned over for execution. Franco compromised. He turned over Laval but kept Degrelle on the grounds that he could not be physically removed from the hospital. A year later Degrelle was given refuge in a monastery. Members of his family and many friends and supporters were arrested and tortured to death by the "democratic liberators" of Belgium. His six children were forcibly shipped to detention centers in different parts of Europe after their names were changed. The authorities ordered that they were never to be permitted contact with one another or with their father. The new Belgian government condemned him to death in absentia on three separate occasions. A special law was passed, the Lex Degrellana, which made it illegal to transfer, possess, or receive any book by or about Degrelle."^[2]

Degrelle started working as a manual laborer in construction, eventually creating a major construction company with important contracts, even building military airfields for the United States in Spain. *"Meanwhile his emissaries searched Europe for his kidnapped children. All were found in the most amazing circumstances and returned to their father."^[2]*

He did not hide himself, maintained a high standard of living, and would frequently appear in public and in private meetings in a uniform featuring his German decorations, while expressing his pride over his earlier career. He continued to live undisturbed when Spain became democratic after the death of Franco.

He continued publishing and voicing his support for nationalism and Holocaust revisionism. He became active in the Spanish National Socialist group Círculo Español de Amigos de Europa (CEDADE), and led its printing press in Barcelona, where he published a large portion of his own writings.

Less politically correct topics in his writings included Hitler and the Waffen-SS, notably based on his own experiences. He published forty books and essays ranging from poetry to economics, from architecture to history.

Death

Léon Degrelle died on 31 March, 1994, in Málaga, Spain.

Quotes (excerpt)

- "German racialism has been deliberately distorted. It never was an anti-"other race" racialism. It was a pro-German racialism. It was concerned with making the German race strong and healthy in every way. Hitler was not interested in having millions of degenerates, if it was in his power not to have them. Today one finds rampant alcohol and drug addiction everywhere. Hitler cared that the German families be healthy, cared that they raise healthy children for the renewal of a healthy nation. German racialism meant re-discovering the creative values of their own race, re-discovering their culture. It was a search for excellence, a noble idea. National Socialist racialism was not against the other races, it was for its own race. It aimed at defending and improving its race, and wished that all other races did the same for themselves." — Léon Degrelle, in: "Epic – The Story of the Waffen SS"

Military record

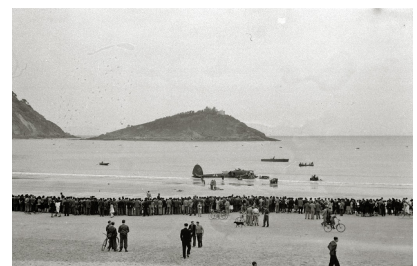
- Degrelle, Léon Joseph Marie**
- SS-Standartenführer d. R. der Waffen-SS
- Born: 15.6.1906 in Bouillon, Belgium.
- Died: 31.3.1994 in San-Antonio-Park Hospital, Málaga, Spain.
- NSDAP-Nr.: [Not a member]



Degrelle during an exhibition in 1943



SS-Sturmabführer Léon Degrelle and SS-Gruppenführer Richard Jungclaus ((Higher SS and Police Leader/HSSPF in Belgium and Northern France)



The wreckage of the Heinkel He 111 in which Degrelle escaped to Spain, May 1945

- SS-Nr.: [None – Walloon Waffen-SS volunteer]

Promotions

- 12.2.1942: Gefreiter (Heer)
- 28.2.1942: Oberfeldwebel (Heer)
- 1.5.1942: Leutnant d. R. (Wehrmacht HeerHeer)
- 1943: Oberleutnant d. R. (Heer)
- 1.6.1943: SS-Obersturmführer d. R. der Waffen-SS
- 1.1.1944: SS-Hauptsturmführer d. R. der Waffen-SS
- 20.4.1944: SS-Sturmbannführer d. R. der Waffen-SS
- 1.1.1945: SS-Obersturmbannführer d. R. der Waffen-SS
- 20.4.1945: SS-Standartenführer d. R. der Waffen-SS

Awards und decorations^[3]

- The Walloon Honor Rexist Badge (*Blood Order*)^[4]
- 13.3.1942 1939 Eisernes Kreuz II. Klasse
- 21.5.1942 1939 Eisernes Kreuz I. Klasse
- 25.8.1942 Infantry Assault Badge (*Infanterie-Sturmabzeichen* (<https://de.metapedia.org/wiki/Infanterie-Sturmabzeichen>)) in Silber
- 15.8.1942 Medaille "Winterschlacht im Osten 1941/42" (Ostmedaille)
- 30.11.1943 Nahkampfspange I. Stufe (Bronze) (other documents indicate 23.12.1943 and 20 .02. 1944)
- 20.2.1944 Wound Badge in Silber (another document indicates 23.12.1943)
- 19.3.1944 Wound Badge in Gold
- 19.3.1944 Nahkampfspange II. Stufe (Silber)
- 22.8.1944 Mentioned in the Wehrmachtbericht
- 14.9.1944 Close Combat Clasp, III. Stufe (Gold)
- Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves
 - 20.2.1944 Knight's Cross as SS-Hauptsturmführer d. R., and Führer SS-Sturmbrigade "Wallonien" / 8.Armeekorps / Heeresgruppe Süd, Eastern Front
 - 27.8.1944 Oak Leaves to Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross as SS-Sturmbannführer d. R. and Kdr. 5.SS-Freiwilligen-Panzer-Brigade "Wallonien" / Kampfgruppe Wagner / Armee-Abteilung Narwa / Heeresgruppe Nord, Northeastern Front
- 9.10.1944 Deutsches Kreuz in Gold as SS-Sturmbannführer d. R. and Kdr. 5.SS-Freiwilligen-Sturmbrigade "Wallonien" / 5.SS-Panzer-Division "Wiking" / III.(germanische) SS-Panzer-Korps / Armee-Abteilung Grasser / Heeresgruppe Nord, Northeastern Front

Further reading

- The Burning Souls* (2020) by Léon Degrelle
- Léon Degrelle in Exile, 1945-1994* (2022) by José Luis Jerez Riesco

External links

- Leon Degrelle (<https://codoh.com/library/document/2510/?lang=en>)
- A Challenge to Thought Control: The Historiography of Leon Degrelle (<https://codoh.com/library/document/2120/?lang=en>)
- Interview with Waffen-SS officer Léon Degrelle (<https://www.bitchute.com/video/lfbNXIV06a8e/>)

Writings in English

- Epic: The Story of the Waffen S.S.* (<https://codoh.com/library/document/2033/?lang=en>)
- Hitler: Born at Versailles* (review (<http://www.wintersonnenwende.com/scriptorium/english/pages/e9904hitl.html>))
- The Enigma of Hitler* (<https://codoh.com/library/document/2511/?lang=en>)
- How Hitler Consolidated Power in Germany and Launched A Social Revolution* (<https://codoh.com/library/document/2374/?lang=en>)
- The Night Of the Long Knives* (<https://archive.org/details/NightOfTheLongKnivesByLeonDeGrelleBarnesReview/mode/2up>)
- Campaign in Russia* (<https://christiansfortruth.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Campaign-in-Russia-.pdf>)

References

- Leon Degrelle <https://codoh.com/library/document/2510/?lang=en>
- A Challenge to Thought Control: The Historiography of Leon Degrelle <https://codoh.com/library/document/2120/?lang=en>
- Based on: Mike Miller, *Axis Biographical Research*, <http://www.geocities.com/~orion47>, June 10 2005
- The Walloon Honor Rexist Badge, known as the Blood Order, was instituted in 1941. In November 1944, RFSS H. Himmler authorized the award to be worn on German uniform when the Walloon Army formation was transferred to the Waffen-SS. The bronze badge has the Walloon Bergundy Cross with a sword crossing it surrounded by a circle. The French inscription reads *Bravery, Honor and Loyalty*. Two Gold Rexist badges were issued, one to Leon Degrelle and another to a Walloon chaplain. Also a Gold Rexist badge with Diamonds was issued to Victor Matthys who took over the leadership of the Rexist movement while Degrelle was in combat in the Eastern Front.

Recipients of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross and Golden Close Combat Clasp				
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Karl AuerJohann BaichlGregor BaunachRudolf BeckerAlfons BialeckiJoachim BoosfeldHermann BuchnerFriedrich BuckLéon Degrelle (Oak Leaves)Siegfried DeutschmannHeinrich DittlofAnton DonnhauserFranz Dutter</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Hans EckertAlois Eisele (Oak Leaves)Karl-Heinrich FinkHeinz FinkeKurt FrankeErwin FrankenfeldErich FriedrichMax FriedrichFranz GössmannErnst GrunauFranz Hack (Oak Leaves)Martin HacklKarl HambergerMax Hansen (Oak Leaves)</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Lorenz HarthanRüdiger HertelBruno Hinz (Oak Leaves)Franz HofbauerFriedrich HolzerFritz JacobeitHermann-Gustav JochimsHans JuchemFranz JuschkatVinzenz KaiserHelmut KämpfeTraugott Kempas (Oak Leaves)Kurt Klein</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Gustav KnittelGünther Konopacki (Oak Leaves)Gerhard KonopkaBernhard KranzHelmut KroegErnst Kutschkau (Oak Leaves)Josef LainerWaldemar LehmannAlfred LexFriedrich LindenbergWilhelm LoosAlfred LorenzErich Lorenz (Oak Leaves)</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Heinz Macher (Oak Leaves)Rolf MagerHermann MaringgeleHelmut MeitzelWerner MeyerWalter Misera (Oak Leaves)Siegfried MoldenauerEmil MöllerWerner MöllerHeinz MüllerAlois ObschilHans-Arno Ostermeier (Oak Leaves)Adolf Peichl</div>

<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>Harry Phönix</u><u>Michael Pössinger</u> (Oak Leaves)<u>Georg Preuß</u><u>Karl Radermacher</u><u>Emil Rentschler</u><u>Franz Richter</u><u>Hans-Heinrich Richter</u></div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>Erich Rudnik</u><u>Alfred Rutkowski</u><u>Johann Sauer</u><u>Otto Sawatzki</u><u>Kurt Schäfer</u><u>Walter Schlags-Koch</u> (Oak Leaves)</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>Heinrich Schmelzer</u> (Oak Leaves)<u>Ernst Schneck</u><u>Gustav Schreiber</u><u>Helmuth Schreiber</u><u>Herbert Schulze</u><u>Walter Schwanbeck</u><u>Walter Seebach</u></div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>Herbert Singer</u><u>Sylvester Stadler</u> (Oak Leaves & Swords)<u>Rolf Tittel</u><u>Otto Vincon</u> (Oak Leaves)<u>Heinrich Volker</u><u>Helmut Wandmaker</u><u>Georg Wenzelburger</u></div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>Heinz Werner</u> (Oak Leaves)<u>Friedrich Wimmer</u><u>Günther-Eberhardt Wislizer</u> (Oak Leaves & Swords)<u>Werner Wolf</u><u>Hermann Wulf</u> (Oak Leaves)</div>
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in alphabetical order

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